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SUBJECT: LEADING JOURNALIST ISSUES HARSH OP-ED ON RULING PARTY

¶1. On October 23, journalist Machado da Graca wrote the following editorial in the independent newspaper Savana. He is a well-respected Mozambican of Portuguese descent who often uses satire to comment on political and social themes. In this article, he summarizes the doubts and concerns of many Mozambicans during this electoral period. The content is such that we present it with no further analysis.

Begin Text:

Vigilance

by Machado da Graca

We are approaching the moment of voting in an electoral process in which, clearly, some wanted to win even before the voters placed their ballots in the ballot boxes. A process in which, according to several media:

- The prestigious names of the independent journalist Salomao Moyana and leader of the Human Rights League Alice Mabota were steered away from the position of Head of the National Election Committee (CNE), in favor of Joao Leopoldo da Costa, an active militant of Frelimo;
- The President of CNE came to enjoy the same category, and accompanying benefits, as the Ministers, and the other members of CNE those of the Vice-Ministers;
- Dr. Luis Mondlane was appointed as President of the Constitutional Court (CC), and recently participated in the birthday party of General Chipande, where he was addressed as "comrade";
- Respected independent jurist Dr. Isabel Rupia's entry into the CC was boycotted;
- The CC removed several candidates from the electoral race, citing a legal figure which does not exist in the electoral law, the "irremediable irregularities";
- The CNE removed a large number of parties from the electoral race, either totally or partially, also citing "irremediable irregularities". Namely, the lack of some documents in the candidature processes. MDM later proved, through convincing documentation, that it had delivered the documents to CNE. If they had disappeared, that had happened within CNE itself;
- The members of CNE, should have, by legal imperative, resigned from any other positions held. Apparently none of them did, and they are still earning the same salaries;
- One party, which was completely unknown, and whose minutes of association are not even published in the official gazette, the PLD, was accepted to run in 10 electoral

provinces. Remember that the publication in the official gazette was one of the requirements to accept any candidature;

- The same PLD received notification by CNE, providing 5 days to remedy some irregularities found, and dated September 1. Remember that CNE had published the final lists 3 days before, on August 28;

- The same PLD remedied the irregularities, replacing candidates without documents for others with documents. The party PARENA tried to do the same but was not allowed;

- Not by coincidence, the symbol of the PLD is a turkey. There is clearly an intention to confuse the voter who wishes to vote for a party whose symbol is a partridge or a rooster;

- The President of UDM, Jose Viana, publicly affirmed that the CNE forced his party to run in the electoral province of Sofala, when he intended to run in other electoral provinces. Not by coincidence, the name of this party is easily mistaken with the MDM, and Sofala is one of the strongholds of this latter political party;

- Throughout the whole campaign, Frelimo used and abused State means for electoral purposes, which is totally illegal. Several media reported, repeatedly, the use of those means, and nothing was done to prevent it;

- The partiality of the police force was notorious, repressing other parties but never the abuse perpetrated by Frelimo followers;

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- The partiality of the public media was notorious, whether in the spaces provided for Frelimo candidates compared to the opposition parties, or in content and technical quality;

- The PIMO candidate was clearly bribed to support Frelimo.

Faced with all this, this process is irremediably soiled, and this stain will spread to its results, whichever they may be.

All that's left to do is cast the votes and count the ballots. We have to be alert and vigilant to avoid cases such as the sadly famous Mr. Albuquerque who in a previous election added hundreds of votes, which were really nonexistent, to Frelimo; or the case of several areas in Tete where the Renamo delegates were expelled from the voting assemblies, and the ballots boxes were filled with Frelimo votes, which in several cases were in higher number than the number of registered voters. Let's not forget the current law says that when this happens, those ballots are validated!

Let's be vigilant, then, in this last phase of the process. Because, as we've been repeatedly told throughout this period the Frelimo party motto: "Frelimo did it! Frelimo does it!!!

End text.
CHAPMAN